

From: [Brace Hayden](#)
To: [Pieske, Shawna](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Letter in Support of Keeping Tepee Lake Free of Motorized Watercraft
Date: Tuesday, October 6, 2020 8:31:15 AM

Montana Fish and Wildlife Commission
c/o Shawna Pieske, Commission Secretary
Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks
P.O. Box 200701
Helena, Montana 59620-0701

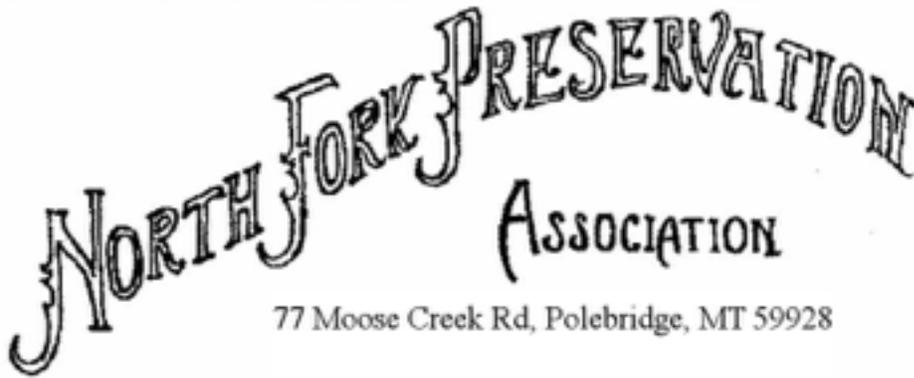
Dear Commissioners,

I'm writing in hopes you consider keeping the North Fork wild and free of motorized watercraft. We have visited the pristine Tepee Lake many times and enjoy the serene and quiet natural ambience it provides. The opportunity to view wildlife (ie. moose, loons, bald eagles) at Tepee Lake is just a bit of what makes the North Fork area so precious and worth preserving. I am in support of the local North Fork petitioners to keep motorized boats and jet-skis off Tepee Lake and applaud this proactive movement prior to conflict. I highly encourage you to proceed to rule making to help permanently protect this quiet and scenic piece of wild Montana.

Thank you again for your consideration,

Brace Hayden


Missoula, MT 59802



September 25th, 2020

To: Fish & Wildlife Commissioner Tim Aldrich, District One

Re: MT FWP - New Rule pertaining to limiting Teepee Lake in Flathead County to manually operated watercraft.

Dear Commissioner Aldrich and all persons concerned:

Last January the snow in the North Fork happened to be particularly perfect on both sides of the valley, a great time to slap on the skis and adventure. Teepee Lake looked like a perfect afternoon escape, not too much elevation gain and exposed to the sunshine (thanks to the Wedge Canyon Fire of 2003), a thing that happens seldom during the long winter months. Just as I reached the shoreline my front right ski hit something. I stopped and kicked, “whack” again, but this time something popped out of the snow. I bent down to brush off the snow and found a huge moose antler! This was my first trip to Teepee Lake after a decade of residence, perhaps because its not as “scenic” as other places in the North Fork. That notion has since been put to rest and with each season its magnificence transforms from sheds and snow to loon families and wetlands. Teepee Lake is a hidden gem in the North Fork. As visitation increases each year “special places”, that happen to hold significant value to the ecosystem, are put under more pressure, especially those that are easily accessible by motorized vehicles like river accesses and through Forest Service roads. Fortunately Teepee Lake has remained intact due to its limited access and absence of motorized boats. We would like to ensure Teepee Lake remain intact by proposing that MT FWP adopt the language of watercraft being limited to “manually operated boats” only.

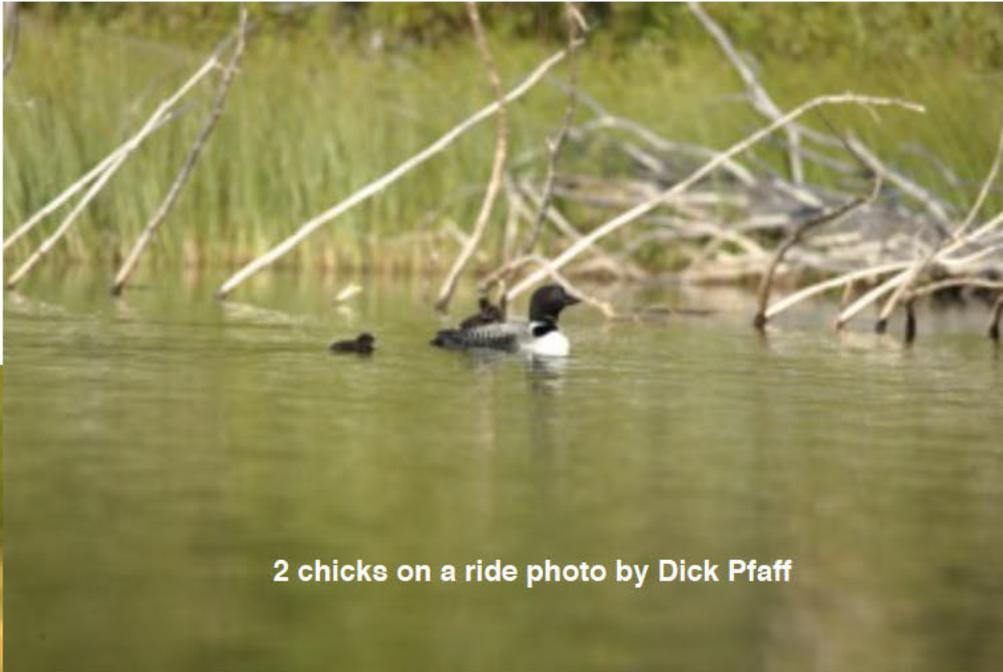
Since then I've learned that, thanks to the collaborative efforts between landowners, neighbors, FWP and USFS in the past, Teepee Lake is famous among locals as a place to observe common loons that have been nesting there for decades, at the least. After learning about the many unique qualities of loons, it has become apparent that the potential threat of motorized boats would be detrimental to the success of nesting loons as they require water free of disturbance. According to one local wildlife photographer that has spent hundreds of hours on Teepee Lake, loon chicks have been documented learning to feed on vegetation on the bottom of the lake. Motors will undoubtedly tear up vegetation and disrupt this pattern, not to mention the undisturbed runway loons require for takeoff.

It seems that managing increased human impact will forever be a challenge to public lands in Montana. Summer 2020, in particular, put significant pressure on the National Forests on the outskirts of Glacier National Park. Although half of the Park and all of the campgrounds were closed this year, that did not stop people from visiting. The result was that heavy use transferred to the surrounding public lands, most of which lacks infrastructure. Meadows in the North Fork have compacted into dust, river accesses and road sides have been converted into toilets and a significant level of negative impact upon important ecosystems have been put upon this place. The fear is that this may become the new "normal".

Preventative action is the least we can be doing right now. Together we can anticipate the worst, such as motorized boats on Teepee Lake, and plan for the best possible outcome for users and wildlife alike. Responsible and collaborative management is necessary and will help protect and preserve important places in our ecosystem, such as Teepee Lake, and ensure they stay intact for vulnerable populations like loons and moose, for the future generations of Flathead County and beyond to enjoy.

On behalf of the Board of the North Fork Preservation Association, I am proposing, in conclusion, that the only watercraft allowed to launch on Teepee Lake should be manually operated due to the potential disturbance to the historic loon population. Thank you so much for your time and your consideration.

Flannery Coats, NFPA President
flannery.e.coats@gmail.com



2 chicks on a ride photo by Dick Pfaff

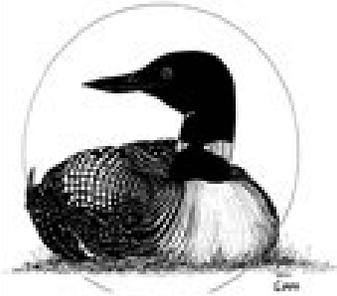


Teepee Loon dance photo by Dick Pfaff



Grizzly Teepee dip photo by Dick Pfaff

September 27, 2020



Montana Fish and Wildlife Commission
c/o Shawna Pieske, Commission Secretary
Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks
P.O. Box 200701
Helena, Montana 59620-0701

Re: Tepee Lake Petition

Dear Commissioners:

We are family members of petitioners, neighbors and frequent North Fork visitors. Each one of us treasures the rare and rapidly vanishing opportunity the North Fork, and Tepee Lake in particular, provides for living and recreating in peace and quiet in today's rapidly changing world. The likely chance to view wildlife such as the moose and loons we see at Tepee Lake is just a bit of what makes the North Fork precious. While none of us can imagine a power boat or jet-ski on Tepee Lake, we applaud the petitioners for submitting this petition to limit boats to manually powered only *before* there is a conflict. We strongly urge you to proceed to rule making to help protect this precious piece of our Montana heritage.

Sincerely,

Karl Borge
Sarah Borge
Dorothy Borge
Elena Potter
Devon Sellwood
Callie Ling
Casey Ling
Chance Ling
Cherstin Ling
Cody Ling
Susan Bayless

David Cole
Greg Cornell
Mary Cornell
Lisa Fleischer
Dave Hadden
Katarina Hammerquist
Will Hammerquist
Ed Heger
Susie Heger
Linda Henderson
Betty Kuropat

Chuck Ludden
Dick Mattson
Ursula Mattson
Jan Metzmaker
Pete Metzmaker
Kevin O'Bryan
Ed Pettit
Dick Pfaff
Tim Their
Fred Vanhorn
Lynn Vanhorn
Betsy Wood

[REDACTED]
Polebridge, MT 59928

September 25, 2020

Mr. Tim Aldrich, Commissioner

MT FWP, District One

Dear Commissioner Aldrich:

I am writing in support of an ARM to limit Teepee Lake, Flathead County, to manually operated watercraft. The reasons for doing so are well documented and clear. The Lake has a long history of providing nesting habitat and security for the common loon. The Lake's remoteness, limited access, and absence of motorized use have proved critical for loon reproduction.

I first came to this area of the North Fork as a twelve-year-old boy, sixty-two years ago. While age and longevity do not confer any special status, they do provide the perspective of change over time. Solitude is a rare treasure worth preserving, not only for ourselves and those who follow us, but for all the creatures that inhabit this special place as well.

An ARM that perpetuates the current status of Teepee Lake has become increasingly important as visitor use expands into the more remote corners of the North Fork. Locals and visitors alike seek out places of solitude and Teepee Lake is one such place that is worthy of protection.

Flathead County has an abundance of water bodies where all types of watercraft are permitted but very few that preserve the qualities found at Teepee Lake and its surrounding landscape. I urge you to be proactive and enact an ARM that protects the status quo of Teepee Lake.

Sincerely,



Richard Hildner

[REDACTED]



Big Sky Country
MONTANA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Representative Debo Powers
House District 3

DURING THE SESSION
State Capitol Building
PO Box 200400
Helena MT 59620-0400
Phone: (406) 444-4800
leg.mt.gov

MAILING ADDRESS
PO Box 1602
Columbia Falls MT 59912
Phone: (406) 407-0787
Debo.Powers@mtleg.gov

Montana Fish and Wildlife Commission
c/o Shawna Pieske, Commission Secretary
Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks
P.O. Box 200701
Helena, Montana 59620-0701

Dear Commissioners,

Tepee Lake in the North Fork offers the quiet serenity that the North Fork was once noted for. With the influx of more and more people, it has become harder to find these places in the North Fork. I agree with so many of my neighbors that this small lake should remain quiet and peaceful, a place where people can view wildlife such as moose and loons, a place where the silence is not destroyed by motorized watercraft. I support the petition to limit boats to manually powered ones and urge you to proceed to rule making to protect this small piece of paradise.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Debo Powers", with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the right.

Representative Debo Powers
Montana House District 3

Montana Fish and Wildlife Commission
c/o Shawna Pieske, Commission Secretary
Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks
P.O. Box 200701
Helena, Montana 59620-0701

My connection to the North Fork of the Flathead is a long-standing one. It is a unique area, especially because it is relatively remote and lacks expensive resorts and the like. In our family's time as landowners there we have witnessed several unsuitable or even grotesque proposals for use of North Fork land, including public land.

There are always those who want to rush into the area and race around and to profit from it.

So far we who love quiet and the natural world of the woods and streams and lakes have been fortunate. But that motorized type of recreation never ceases its pressure for its own idea of life in the bosom of nature and now here it is again in the form of (noisy) water skis on a peaceful little lake and the heck with the wishes of the neighbors.

Please don't push the North Fork in this direction.

Signed,

Cecily McNeil,

I am 96 yoa; a founder of the North Fork Compact, a signer of the Interlocal Agreement, member of advisory group on the Present North Fork plan. My Moose Creek land is under a conservation easement with the US Forest Service.

Should you wish to verify my identity, my phone number is 406 755 5041.

September 25, 2020

Montana Fish and Wildlife Commission
c/o Shawna Pieske, Commission Secretary
Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks
P.O. Box 200701
Helena, Montana 59620-0701

Re: Tepee Lake Petition

Dear Commissioners:

We recently learned much to our surprise that motorized watercraft are permitted on Tepee Lake. This would seem like a regulatory oversight given that the lake size of 43-acres barely exceeds the 35-acre minimum for motorize use. Given the location and critical nature of this lake to wildlife and in particular nesting Loons. The petition provides a thorough analysis of the lakes value and importance.

My wife and I have owned property at 15640 North Fork Road for over 25 years. Our land and Cabin are several miles away from the lake but knowing that we can continue to visit the lake to enjoy wildlife and the tranquility of the lake is invaluable to us. With easy public access this setting can be enjoyed by all visitors to the area.

We urge the Commission to be proactive in correcting this oversight to avoid a potential future conflict and environmental damage.

Thank you for your consideration in this matter.

Sincerely,

Ed and Susie Heger

████████████████████
Kalispell MT 59901
████████████████████
████████████████

[REDACTED]
Folebridge, MT 59928

September 25th, 2020

Mr. Tim Aldrich, Commissioner
MT, FWP, District One

Dear Commissioner Aldrich:

I wish to convey my support for the ARM being presented to the FWP Commission by petitioners Potter, Potter, Borge, Borge and Kaminski all of whom are property owners whose land borders Tepee Lake in the North Fork of the Flathead River Valley in Northwestern Montana. They are requesting a new rule that would limit Tepee Lake to only non-motorized watercraft.

As you are aware, the North Fork in general and Tepee Lake in particular offer remote public recreation that is highly unique in it's unspoiled attributes, wildness and beauty while being relatively accessible. Tepee Lake has long been recognized as important loon habitat and has remained as such because of the light use it receives. It has no value as a fishery and there has been no historic use of motorized watercraft. However, the North Fork has been "discovered" by Montanans and tourists alike and this has resulted in a significant increase in recreational pressure to the Wild and Scenic River corridor with the attendant habitat destruction. It is only a matter of time before those pressures spill over to Tepee Lake. Motorized craft would most certainly irreversibly change the valued qualities of Tepee Lake and permanently damage the important loon habitat.

I have been a part-time resident of the North Fork for over 25 years. The Commission has a unique opportunity to proactively preserve this treasured part of the North Fork. I strongly encourage you to do so.

Sincerely,



Suzanne Daniell Hildner, M.D.



[REDACTED]
Kalispell MT 59901
[REDACTED]

25-Sep-20

Montana Fish and Wildlife Commission
c/o Shawna Pieske, Commission Secretary
Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks
P.O. Box 200701
Helena, Montana 59620-0701

PETITION TO REASONABLY LIMIT BOAT USE ON TEPEE LAKE

I am familiar with the petition to limit the type of boat use on Tepee Lake and strongly support the action recommended therein. I reside most days during the 6 warmest months of the year a few miles north of Tepee Lake (as the crow flies) and am totally aware of the petitions description of the increase in human activity and the decrease in peace, quiet and serenity throughout the North Fork River drainage.

Regulation that limited the type of boat use on Tepee Lake and all lakes in the North Fork drainage area would be a wise step in a general direction to preserve and protect the wild and remote character for this last of such best places.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Don J. Burgard'. The signature is stylized with a long horizontal line extending to the left and several loops and curves on the right side.

DON J. BURGARD

Sept 24, 2020

Montana Fish and Wildlife Commission
C/o Shawna Pieske, Commission Secretary
Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks
PO Box 200701
Helena, MT 59620-0701

Dear Commissioners:

I'm a North Fork resident and I wholeheartedly support the petition to designate Tepee Lake as a non-motorized watercraft lake. The peace and quiet we used to take for granted along the North Fork of the Flathead are disappearing. We have been discovered. Even those of us who live well north of Polebridge are dodging traffic and coping with uninvited campers on our property. I don't mind sharing the North Fork's beauty with others, but I do mind activity that disturbs the wildlife and serenity of this special place.

It is important to preserve a few enclaves where people and animals can relax and recharge without motorized technology interfering. Tepee Lake is currently such a place. Its environs would be degraded by motorboats and jet skis. I hate to think about the loons and mergansers being driven away. Let's only ruffle this little lake with paddles and oars.

Sincerely yours,

Emily S. Murphree

████████████████████

Polebridge, MT 59928

Jan and Pete Metzmaker



Whitefish, MT 59937

September 26, 2020

Montana Fish and Wildlife Commission
c/o Shawna Pieske, Commission Secretary
Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks
P.O. Box 200701
Helena, Montana 59620-0701

Dear Shawna,

We have spent many enjoyable days at Teepee Lake and thoroughly enjoy the peace and solitude that is missing on other area lakes. Even though we don't live on Whitefish Lake, we are close enough to hear the constant annoying drone of power boats and jet skis. There is no such thing as a quiet summer evening here.

Of special concern is the family of loons who show up annually. Allowing power boats on Teepee Lake would only cause a severe disruption in their lives. I doubt if any of the wildlife frequenting the lake would ever become accustomed to the commotion.

Please consider the unique setting of Teepee Lake and allow only manually operated watercraft. It is such a small, pristine body of water, allowing motorized boats is so unnecessary.

Thank you for allowing comment on this important issue.

Sincerely,

Jan and Pete Metzmaker

Montana Fish and Wildlife Commission
c/o Shawna Pieske, Commission Secretary
Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks
P.O. Box 200701
Helena, MT 59620-0701

Dear Commissioners:

We have been watching the loons, water fowl, and an occasional moose and otter on Tepee Lake for close to thirty years. We've had the opportunity to hear wolves howl, see mountain lion tracks and an occasional bear. Putting a canoe, car top fishing boat, or kayak into Teepee Lake allows one to silently watch for wildlife while enjoying the quiet beauty of the lake. We've brought relatives from out-of-state to experience the silence and solitude Tepee Lake and the North Fork affords one to experience.

We agree with the petitioners requesting a rule to limit Tepee Lake to manually powered watercraft.

Thank you for allowing us to express our strong opinion,

Respectfully,

Terry and Dennis Divoky

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

West Glacier, Mt 59936

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

September 25, 2020

Brace and Kathleen Hayden

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Montana Fish and Game Commission
c/o Shawna Pieske, Commission Secretary
Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks
P.O. Box 200701
Helena, MT 59620-0701

Dear Commissioners:

Our family has hiked, picked huckleberries and skied in the North Fork of the Flathead River drainage for nearly 50 years. Few places in Montana are as breathtakingly beautiful and wild. In an otherwise noisy and crowded world, the North Fork remains quiet and peaceful. Man's impact is still minimal. We want our grandkids and future generations to experience the North Fork as we have and for this to happen the North Fork must be managed so as to preserve this area as it is today.

It is for these reasons that we support the petition to limit boats on Tepee Lake to those that are manually powered. We know Tepee Lake. It is a tiny gem in the North Fork where moose feed and loons give calls that remain forever in your mind. Power boats and jet skis are not appropriate here. While motorized boat conflicts do not presently exist on Tepee Lake, there is no assurance that this will remain so. Thus we encourage the FWP commissioners to initiate the rule making process that will restrict watercraft on Tepee lake to those that are non-motorized. You will be taking a major step towards preserving the lake's quiet beauty.

Sincerely,

Brace and Kathleen Hayden

September 27, 2020

Montana Fish and Game Commission
c/o Shawna Pieske, Commission Secretary
Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks
P.O. Box 200701
Helena, MT 59620-0701

Dear Commissioners:

We have enjoyed the Tepee Lake since 1971 as a refuge for loons and other waterfowl, as well as habitat for highly vulnerable animals: grizzlies, wolves, coyotes, lynx, mountain lions, and all the small creatures.

Please protect this unique area from motorized boats or other motorized water vehicles. They would destroy this lake.

Respectfully yours,

Merry R. O'Hare